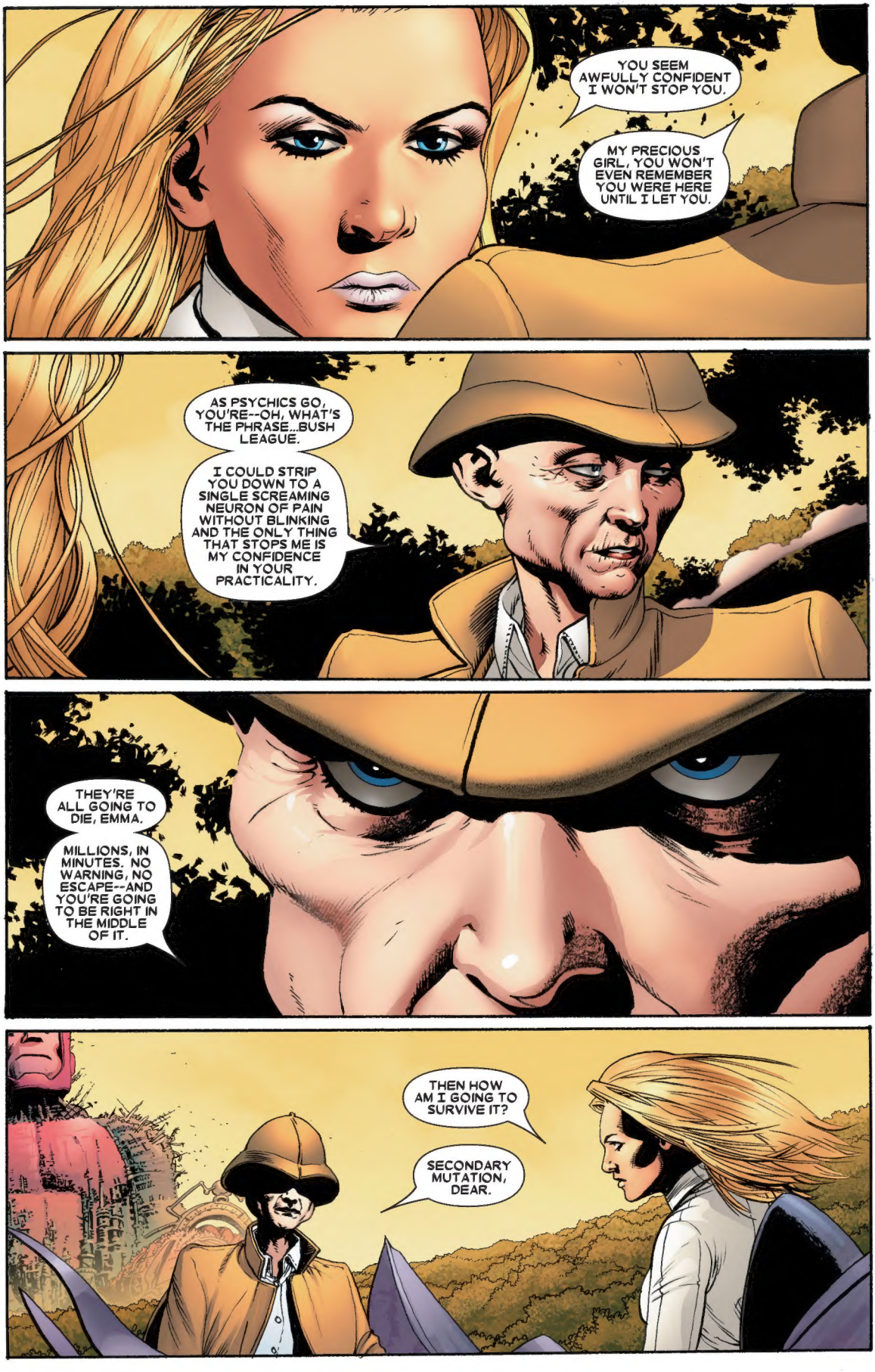
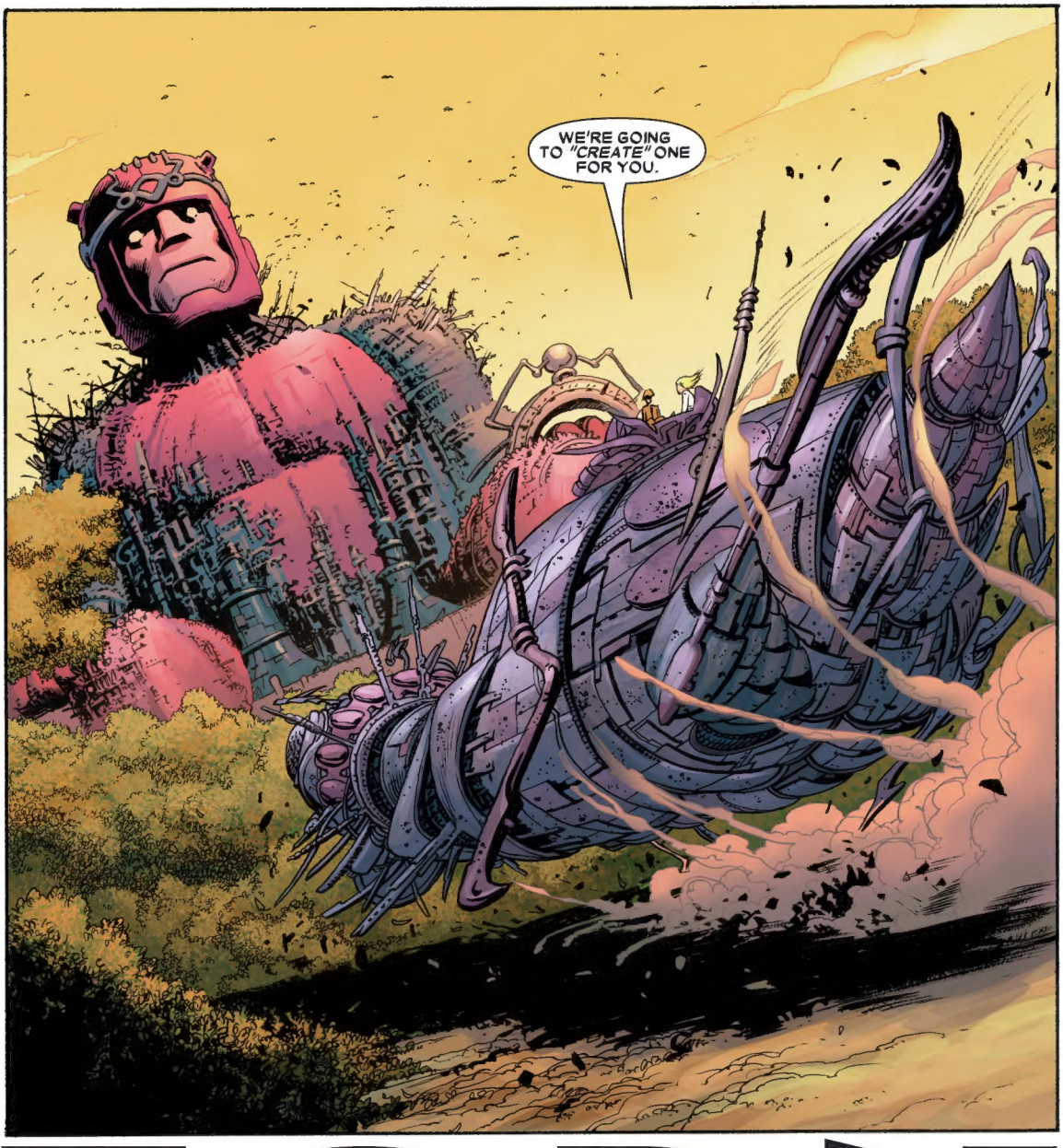
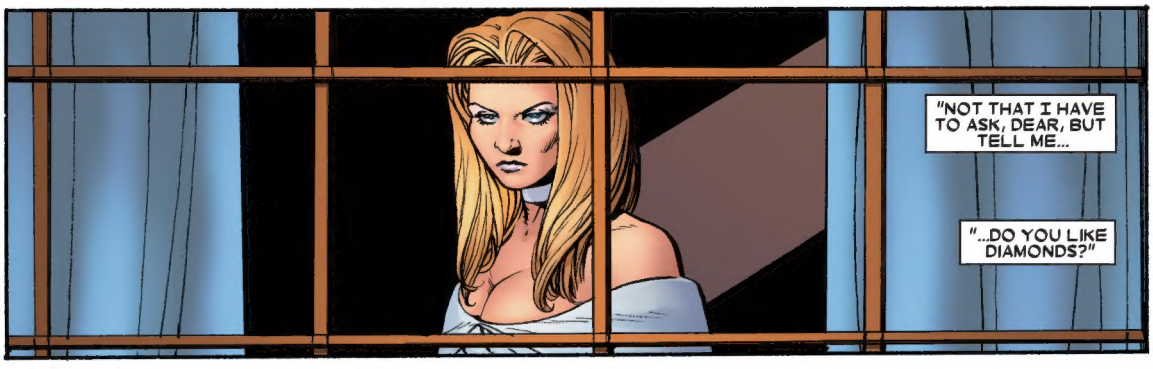
MARVEL
13
.com
ASTONISHING
X-MEN
JOSS WHEDON • JOHN CASSADAY

SOME TIME AGO


YOU SEEM AWFULLY CONFIDENT I WON'T STOP YOU.
MY PRECIOUS GIRL, YOU WON'T EVEN REMEMBER YOU WERE HERE UNTIL I LET YOU.
AS PSYCHICS GO, YOU'RE--OH, WHAT'S THE PHRASE...BUSH LEAGUE.
I COULD STRIP YOU DOWN TO A SINGLE SCREAMING NEURON OF PAIN WITHOUT BLINKING AND THE ONLY THING THAT STOPS ME IS MY CONFIDENCE IN YOUR PRACTICALITY.
THEY'RE ALL GOING TO DIE, EMMA.
MILLIONS, IN MINUTES. NO WARNING, NO ESCAPE--AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.
THEN HOW AM I GOING TO SURVIVE IT?
SECONDARY MUTATION, DEAR.


WE'RE GOING TO "CREATE" ONE FOR YOU.

TORN


"NOT THAT I HAVE TO ASK, DEAR, BUT TELL ME...
"...DO YOU LIKE DIAMONDS?"

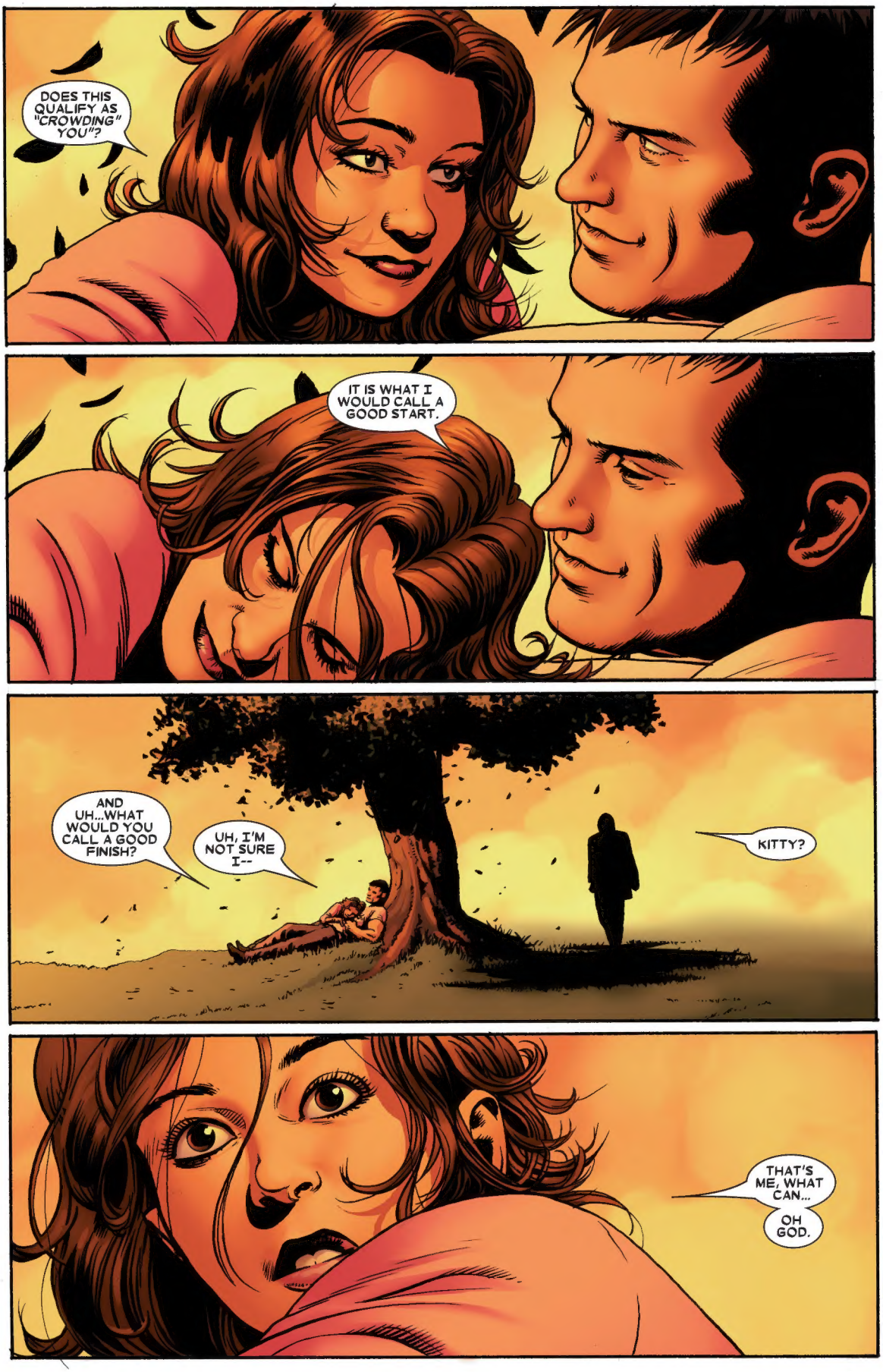
NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
A LOT'S HAPPENED, BUNCHA STUDENTS GONE, BUT THAT DON'T CHANGE WHAT MATTERS.
WHAT MATTERS IS THE FIGHT.
WHAT MATTERS IS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE IN THIS ROOM...YOU ALL WUSSED OUT.
EXCUSE ME...
YEAH?
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT THE LAST TIME WE WERE IN THIS ROOM WE FOUND MY BEST FRIEND *DEAD.*
AND THEN HELL OPENED UP UNDERNEATH US. LITERALLY.
SIR.
YEAH, WOW, THAT'S REALLY TERRIBLE. BUT YOU WANT ADVANCED SELF-PITY, I THINK THAT'S PROFESSOR SUMMERS, ACROSS THE HALL.
THIS IS COMBAT.

BUT, UH...ISN'T THE DANGER ROOM INACTIVE? SINCE THE... ISN'T THIS JUST A ROOM NOW?
YEAH, IT'S A BIG GREY ROOM. NO COMPUTERS, NO SIMULATORS... KINDA BARE.
THEY SHOULD MAYBE GET A FERN.
SO WHAT'S THE...UH... DANGER?
LIGHTS.
CLICK
SNIKT

AND WE ASSUME THE CHILDREN ARE GOING TO SURVIVE THIS EXPERIENCE BECAUSE...
LOGAN'LL GO EASY. WELL, FOR LOGAN.
IT'S WHAT THEY NEED.
GOING UP AGAINST THE "GREAT AND TERRIBLE WOLVERINE"...THEY'LL COME OUT FEELING LIKE HEROES JUST 'CAUSE THEY SURVIVED.
AND AGAIN THE ASSUMPTION...
WELL, NOBODY'S AFRAID OF ME OR I'D'VE DONE IT. YOU COULD...
'COURSE, THAT WOULD MEAN LEAVING THE LAB FOR FIVE MINUTES. AND THAT'S NOT ON THE MENU, IS IT?
IF IT'S NOT A MISSION OR A CLASS YOU'RE HERE, NO EXCEPTIONS.
YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU WHY YOU'RE DOWN HERE?
I'D LOVE IT. AFTER YOU TELL ME WHY YOU'RE HANGING AROUND HERE AND NOT UPSTAIRS WITH YOUR LADY LOVE.
YEAH.
HMM.

NICE.
MY CLAWS'LL PIERCE YOUR ARMOR, BUT NOT THE REST OF ME.
WHAT'S THAT STUFF MADE OF?
IT'S...MY FAMILY. I...I MEAN, THE LINE OF MY ANCESTORS PASSES THIS STRENGTH, THIS PROTECTION THAT I CAN ACCESS, IT'S HARD TO...
YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU WOULDN'T GO THROUGH?
WHAT AM I, RESEARCH GUY? IT ALL WORKED OUT.
I COULD BE DEAD!
DEAD SOUNDS NICE...
BUNCHA WHINERS...
ここでは殺人ゴリラが教師として通用しているとは なとも恥ずかしいことですわ。

いつも愚痴ばかり言って御先祖さん対して耳ざわりしくないですか。
I'M NEVER GONNA MAKE X-MAN...
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?


DOES THIS QUALIFY AS "CROWDING" YOU"?
IT IS WHAT I WOULD CALL A GOOD START.
AND UH...WHAT WOULD YOU CALL A GOOD FINISH?
UH, I'M NOT SURE I--
KITTY?
THAT'S ME, WHAT CAN...
OH GOD.

DAD!
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!
WHOAH!
WAIT. THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.
I KNOW.
AND THIS HAS SORT OF BEEN HAPPENING A LOT TO ME.
IT'S TRUE.
I KNOW.
BUT IT'S ME. BELIEVE ME.
NOBODY ELSE WOULD FEEL THIS WAY JUST LOOKING AT YOU.
OH DADDY...
I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF QUESTIONS, KITTEN.

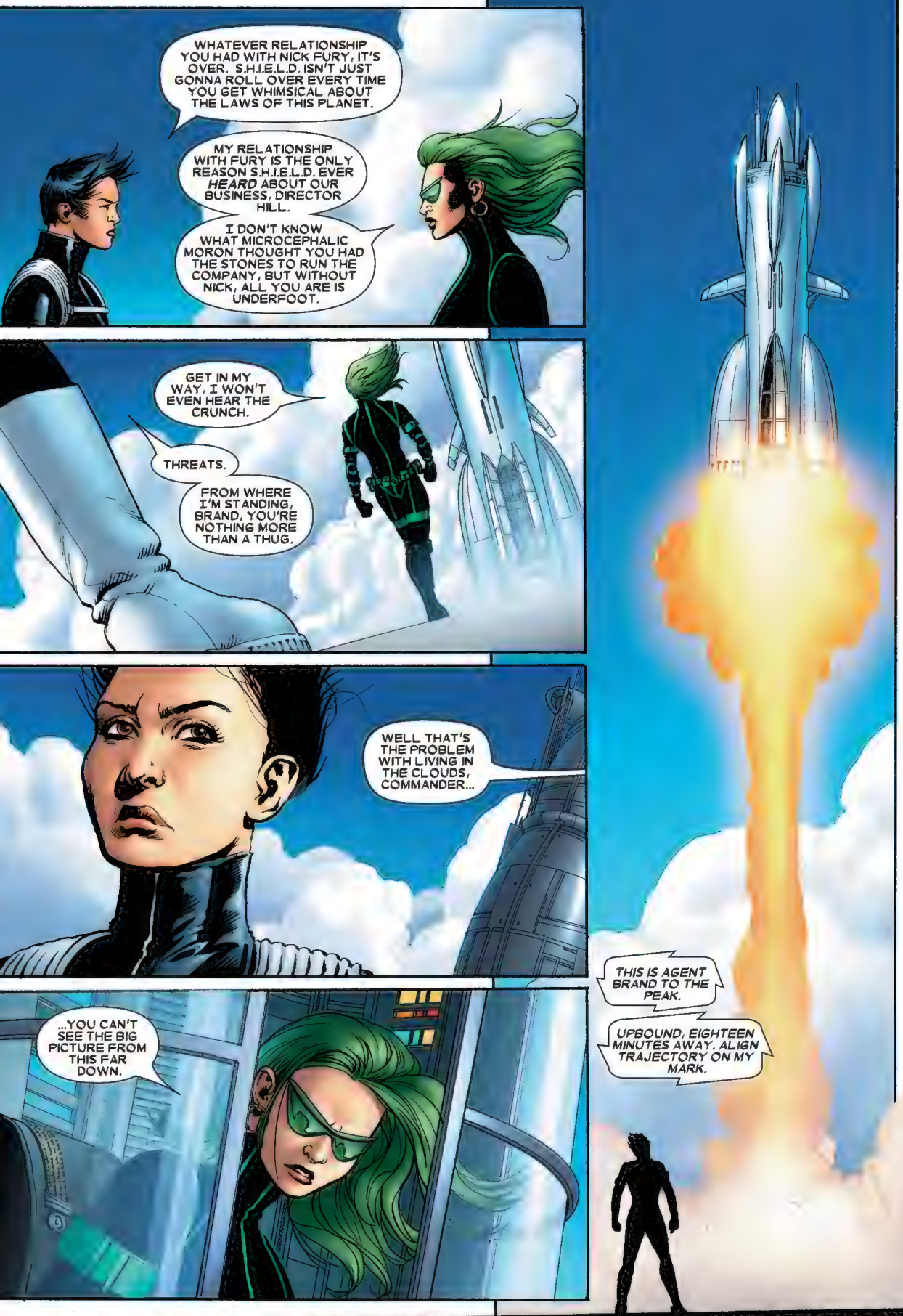
I JUST HAVE ONE.
WHY DID YOU LET US DIE?
AHHH!
KITTY! ARE YOU--
OH. OH.
DAMN.

BAD DREAM.
YEAH, REAL KICKER.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
GETTIN' BETTER ALREADY.
HAVING FUN, EMMA?
BAD DREAMS. BIG DEAL.
I DREAM MYSELF TO LIFE. I SLEEP AND MAKE ME OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OVER--
--YES, AS YOU'VE MENTIONED OVER AND OVER AND CAN WE DISPENSE WITH THE PRELIMINARIES?
I RATHER CRAVE ACTION.

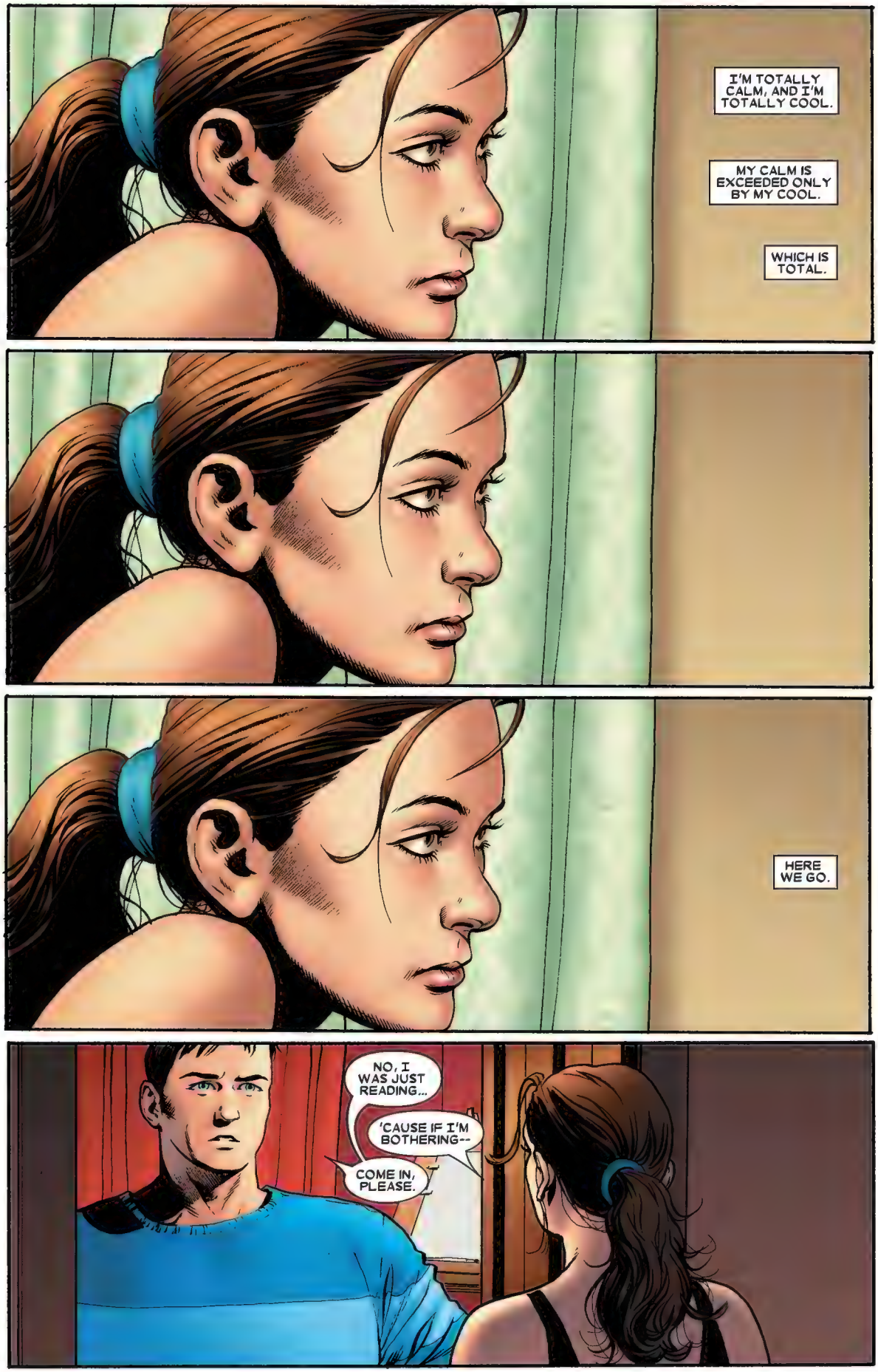
IS THAT WHY YOU GROW SO CARELESS, SEBASTIAN? TO FORCE MY HAND?
I THINK WE'VE BEEN SPECTACULARLY PATIENT, CHILD.
YOU SHOW UP, WITH NO REGARD FOR...I COULD HEAR EVERY *WORD* YOU THOUGHT IN GENOSHA.
BUT XAVIER COULDN'T.
DEAR CHARLES WAS THE ONLY REAL THREAT TO OUR LITTLE CABAL, AND HE WAS WELL WRAPPED UP IN HIS OWN PROBLEMS. AS ALWAYS.
BLESS YOU, LADY.
UNLIKELY.
I THINK SEBASTIAN IS RIGHT.
I DON'T KNOW.
YOU NEVER KNOW!
I'M SORRY, I KNOW YOU'RE THE TEACHER AND NOT ME BUT I'M SO *BORED!*
I WANT TO DREAM SOME *NOISE.*
THAT'S A MAJORITY, DEAR.
YOU DON'T RUN THIS CLUB.
I KEPT YOU *ALIVE*, YOUNG LADY.
AND I RETURNED THE FAVOR.
LADIES...

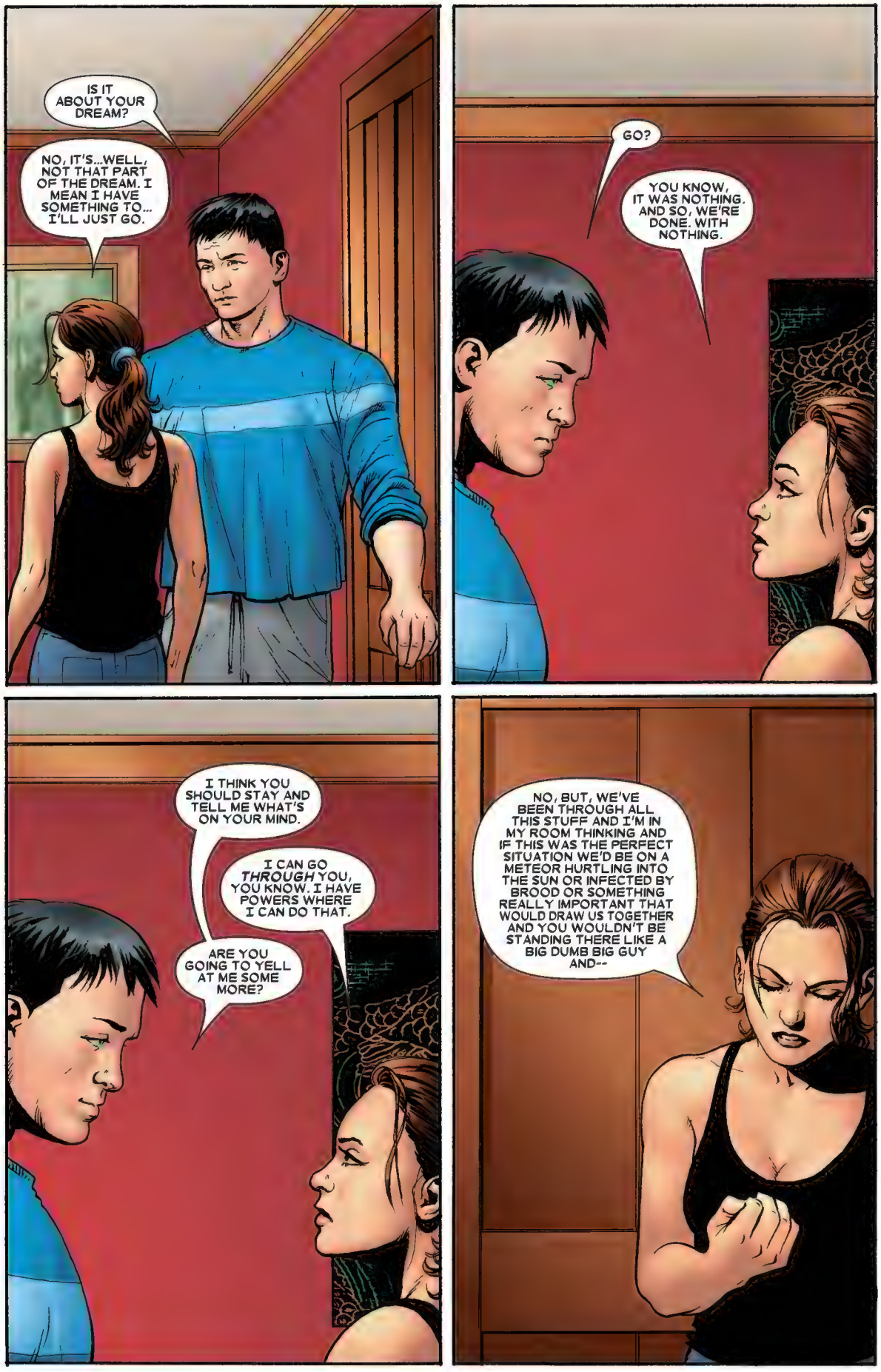
I'D LIKE TO MENTION TWO THINGS.
FIRST, WHILE THE ORIGINAL HELLFIRE CLUB HAS DEVOLVED INTO A GLORIFIED STRIP-BAR, WE HAVE AN ACTUAL MISSION. A HOLY ONE, TO ME.
AND SECOND, WE WERE ALL BROUGHT TOGETHER BY ONE PERSON. AND IN MY OPINION HERS IS THE ONLY VOICE THAT NEED BE HEARD.
PERFECTION?
IS IT TIME?
EMMA.
YOUR GAME IS FIRST.

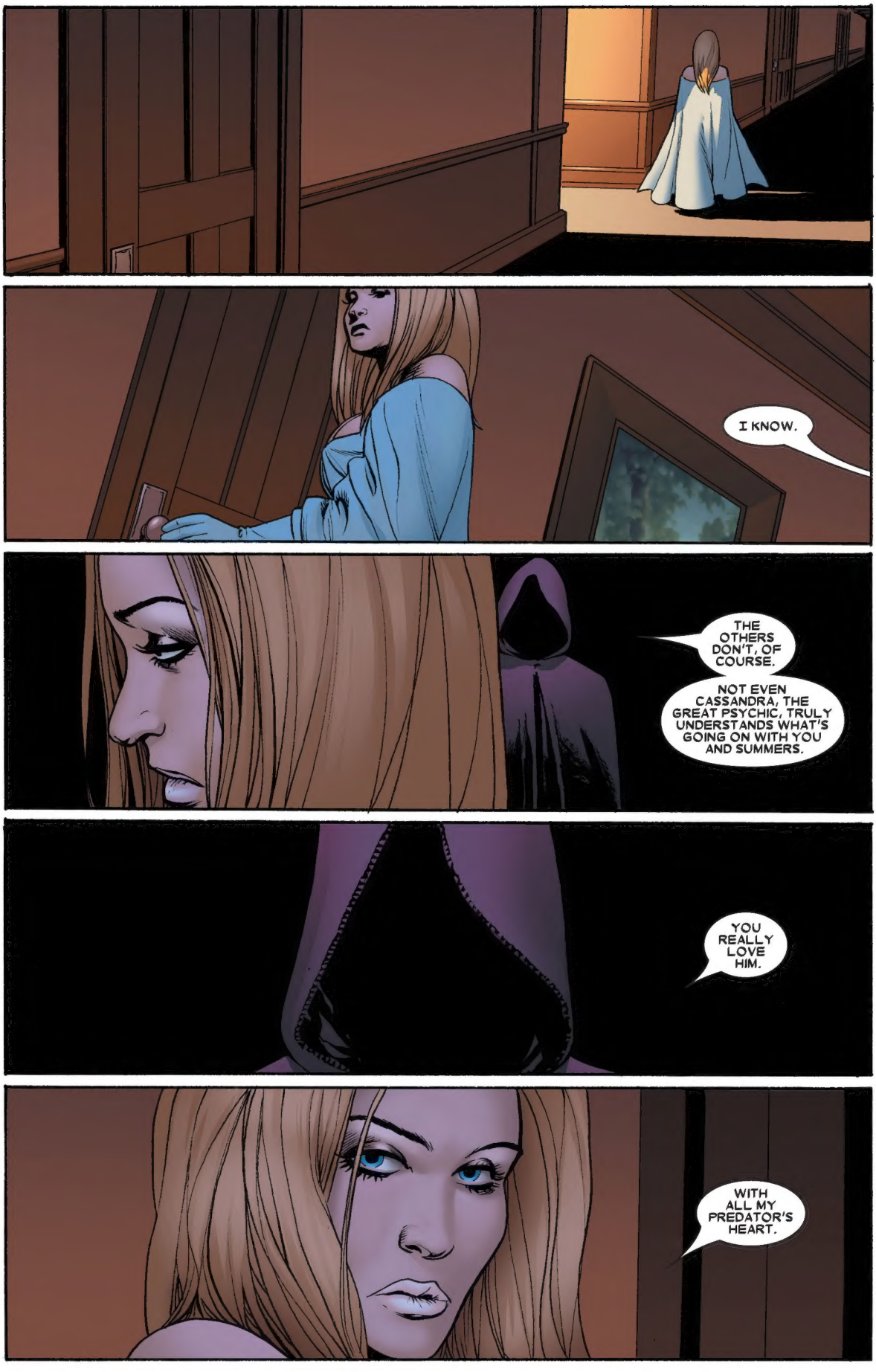
NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
THE MUTANT SITUATION IS STILL A THREAT, AND I WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE X-MEN IN--
I KNOW HOW YOU "MONITOR", AGENT BRAND. YOU'VE BROKEN EVERY LAW YOU'VE EVER HEARD OF, YOU'RE HARBORING AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL--
"INTERGALACTIC."
THE TERM IS "INTERGALACTIC", AND THAT MEANS IT'S SO FAR OUT OF YOUR JURISDICTION YOU COULDN'T BREATHE THERE.

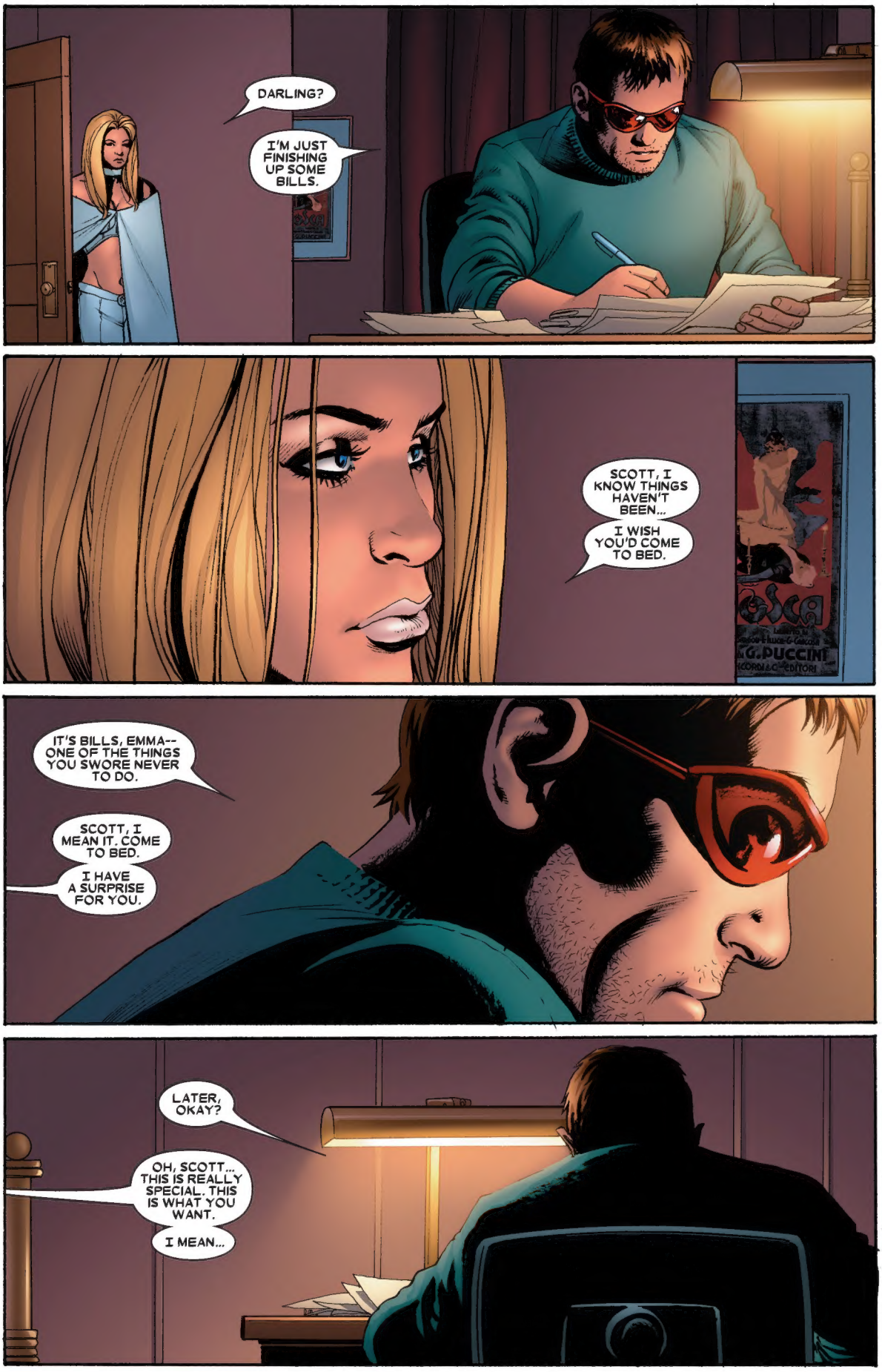

WHATEVER RELATIONSHIP YOU HAD WITH NICK FURY, IT'S OVER. S.H.I.E.L.D. ISN'T JUST GONNA ROLL OVER EVERY TIME YOU GET WHIMSICAL ABOUT THE LAWS OF THIS PLANET.
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH FURY IS THE ONLY REASON S.H.I.E.L.D. EVER *HEARD* ABOUT OUR BUSINESS, DIRECTOR HILL.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT MICROCEPHALIC MORON THOUGHT YOU HAD THE STONES TO RUN THE COMPANY, BUT WITHOUT NICK, ALL YOU ARE IS UNDERFOOT.
GET IN MY WAY, I WON'T EVEN HEAR THE CRUNCH.
THREATS.
FROM WHERE I'M STANDING, BRAND, YOU'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A THUG.
WELL THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH LIVING IN THE CLOUDS, COMMANDER...
...YOU CAN'T SEE THE BIG PICTURE FROM THIS FAR DOWN.
THIS IS AGENT BRAND TO THE PEAK.
UPBOUND, EIGHTEEN MINUTES AWAY. ALIGN TRAJECTORY ON MY MARK.

THIS IS THE PEAK. TRAJECTORY CONFIRMED.
WE GOT NEWS, BOSS.
I'M TOTALLY COOL.


I'M TOTALLY CALM, AND I'M TOTALLY COOL.
MY CALM IS EXCEEDED ONLY BY MY COOL.
WHICH IS TOTAL.
HERE WE GO.
NO, I WAS JUST READING...
'CAUSE IF I'M BOTHERING--
COME IN, PLEASE.


IS IT ABOUT YOUR DREAM?
NO, IT'S...WELL, NOT THAT PART OF THE DREAM. I MEAN I HAVE SOMETHING TO... I'LL JUST GO.
GO?
YOU KNOW, IT WAS NOTHING. AND SO, WE'RE DONE. WITH NOTHING.
I THINK YOU SHOULD STAY AND TELL ME WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND.
I CAN GO *THROUGH* YOU, YOU KNOW. I HAVE POWERS WHERE I CAN DO THAT.
ARE YOU GOING TO YELL AT ME SOME MORE?
NO, BUT, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS STUFF AND I'M IN MY ROOM THINKING AND IF THIS WAS THE PERFECT SITUATION WE'D BE ON A METEOR HURTLING INTO THE SUN OR INFECTED BY BROOD OR SOMETHING REALLY IMPORTANT THAT WOULD DRAW US TOGETHER AND YOU WOULDN'T BE STANDING THERE LIKE A BIG DUMB BIG GUY AND--


I KNOW.
THE OTHERS DON'T, OF COURSE.
NOT EVEN CASSANDRA, THE GREAT PSYCHIC, TRULY UNDERSTANDS WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU AND SUMMERS.
YOU REALLY LOVE HIM.
WITH ALL MY PREDATOR'S HEART.


DARLING?
I'M JUST FINISHING UP SOME BILLS.
SCOTT, I KNOW THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN...
I WISH YOU'D COME TO BED.
IT'S BILLS, EMMA-- ONE OF THE THINGS YOU SWORE NEVER TO DO.
SCOTT, I MEAN IT. COME TO BED.
I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU.
LATER, OKAY?
OH, SCOTT... THIS IS REALLY SPECIAL. THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT.
I MEAN...

...I'M WEARING YOUR FAVORITE OUTFIT...